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Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects
First session
28 February-3 March 2000

Report of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects

I. Introduction

1. At its fifty-fourth session, the General Assembly adopted resolution 54/54 V of 15 December 1999, the operative part of which reads as follows:

"*The General Assembly*,

"...

"1. *Decides* to convene the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in June/July 2001;

"2. *Also decides* that the scope of the Conference shall be the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects;

"3. *Further decides* to establish a preparatory committee open to participation by all States, which will hold no fewer than three sessions, the first session to be held in New York from 28 February to 3 March 2000;

"4. *Decides* that the specialized agencies, other relevant intergovernmental organizations and relevant entities, having received a standing invitation to participate as observers in the sessions and in the work of the General Assembly, shall participate, as observers, in the Preparatory Committee, and requests the Committee to take a decision on the modalities of attendance of non-governmental organizations at its sessions;

"5. *Requests* the Preparatory Committee to decide, at its first session, on the date and venue of the Conference in 2001 as well as on the dates and venue of its subsequent sessions;

"6. *Stresses* the need to ensure the widest possible and effective participation in the Conference in 2001;

"7. *Requests* the Preparatory Committee to make recommendations to the Conference on all relevant matters, including the objective, a draft agenda, draft rules of procedure and draft final documents, which will include a programme of action, and to decide on background documents to be made available in advance;

"8. *Invites* all Member States, in particular those that have not yet done so, in response to the note verbale of the Secretary-General dated 20 January 1999, to communicate to the Secretary-General their views on the agenda and other relevant questions relating to the Conference;

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"9. *Requests* the Secretary-General to transmit the replies of Member States relevant to paragraph 8 above to the Preparatory Committee and to render the Preparatory Committee and the Conference all necessary assistance, including the provision of essential background information, relevant documents and summary records;

"10. *Endorses* the report of the Secretary-General on small arms, prepared with the assistance of the Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms pursuant to General Assembly resolution 52/38 J, bearing in mind the views of Member States on the report;

"11. *Calls upon* all Member States to implement the relevant recommendations contained in section IV of that report to the extent possible and where necessary in cooperation with appropriate international and regional organizations and/or through international and regional cooperation;

"12. *Requests* the Secretary-General to seek the views of Member States on the report as well as on the implementation of the relevant recommendations contained therein;

"13. *Also requests* the Secretary-General to implement the relevant recommendations contained in section IV of the report within available financial resources and with any other assistance provided by States in a position to do so and in cooperation with appropriate international and regional organizations where necessary;

"14. *Further requests* the Secretary-General, in order to assist in preventing the illicit trafficking in and illicit circulation of small arms and light weapons:

"(a) To carry out a study, within available financial resources and with any other assistance provided by Member States in a position to do so, and with the assistance of governmental experts appointed by him, on the basis of equitable geographical representation, while seeking the views of Member States, on the feasibility of restricting the manufacture and trade of such weapons to the manufacturers and dealers authorized by States, which will cover the brokering activities, particularly illicit activities, relating to small arms and light weapons, including transportation agents and financial transactions;

"(b) To submit the study as one of the background documents for the Conference to be held in 2001;

"15. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-fifth session the item entitled 'Small arms'."

2. The following States were represented at the first session of the Preparatory Committee: Algeria, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Benin, Bolivia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Bulgaria, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chile, China, Colombia, Costa Rica, Côte d'Ivoire, Croatia, Cuba, Czech Republic, Denmark, Djibouti, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Estonia, Ethiopia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Holy See, Honduras, Hungary, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Iraq, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Kyrgyzstan, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Latvia, Lebanon, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Malta, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, Mongolia, Morocco, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Norway, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Peru, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Republic of the Congo, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Slovakia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Switzerland, Syrian Arab Republic, Tajikistan, Thailand, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Togo, Tonga, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United Republic of Tanzania, United States of America, Uruguay, Uzbekistan, Venezuela, Viet Nam, and Yemen.

3. The following intergovernmental organizations and entities participated as observers in the first session of the Preparatory Committee: Caribbean Community, European Commission, Organization of the Islamic Conference, Organization of African Unity, International Committee of the Red Cross, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat), United Nations Children's Fund and United Nations Development Programme.

II. Organization of the work of the Preparatory Committee

4. Pursuant to paragraph 3 of General Assembly resolution 54/54 V, the Preparatory Committee held its first session at United Nations Headquarters from 28 February to 3 March 2000. During the session, the Preparatory Committee held a total of 10 meetings, 4 of which were held as closed meetings. A total of four meetings were devoted to the general debate, in which 57 participating States delivered statements on the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

5. The Preparatory Committee elected the following officers:

Chairman:

Mr. Carlos Dos Santos (Mozambique)

Vice-Chairmen:

Mr. Yashar Aliyev (Azerbaijan)
Mr. Herbert Calhoun (United States of America)
Mr. Pierre Charasse (France)
Mr. Alioune Diagne (Senegal)
Ms. Dace Dobrāja (Latvia)
Mr. Mitsuro Donowaki (Japan)
Mr. Mário Duarte (Portugal)
Mr. Mark Gaillard (Canada)
Mr. Shen Guofang (China)
Mr. Samuel R. Insanally (Guyana)
Mr. Ismail Khairat (Egypt)
Mr. Valeri P. Kuchynski (Ukraine)
Mr. Fares M. Kuindwa (Kenya)
Mr. Gunnar Lindeman (Norway)
Mr. Filipe de Macedo Soares (Brazil)
Mr. Juan Miguel Miranda (Peru)
Mr. Hamid Baeidi Nejad (Islamic Republic of Iran)
Mr. Richard Pierce (Jamaica)
Mr. Denis Dangue Réwaka (Gabon)
Mr. Carlos D. Sorreta (Philippines)
Mr. Alyaksandr Sychov (Belarus)
Ms. Nury Vargas (Costa Rica)
Mr. Makmur Widodo (Indonesia)
Mr. Przemyslaw Wyganowski (Poland)

It was agreed that the endorsement of another Vice-Chairman from the Group of African States was being formalized.

Rapporteur:

At the 8th meeting, on 2 March, Mr. Gaillard (Canada) was elected as Rapporteur. At the 10th meeting, on 3 March, he resigned as Rapporteur.

6. Ms. Agnès Marcaillou, Senior Political Affairs Officer, Department for Disarmament Affairs, served as Secretary of the Preparatory Committee.

7. At its 1st meeting, on 28 February, the Preparatory Committee adopted its agenda as contained in document A/CONF.192/PC/1.

8. In its consideration of paragraph 5 of General Assembly resolution 54/54 V, concerning the request to the Preparatory Committee to decide, at its first session, on the date and the venue of the Conference in 2001 as well as on the dates and venue of its subsequent sessions, the Preparatory Committee had before it a non-paper prepared by the Secretariat containing a list of dates tentatively reserved in different venues.

9. In pursuance of paragraph 8 of the same resolution, inviting Member States to communicate their views on the agenda and other relevant questions relating to the Conference, the Secretary-General transmitted a note verbale dated 31 January 2000 to all Member States. The replies of three Member States, Argentina, Canada and Thailand, contained in document A/54/260/Add.1, were circulated during the first session of the Preparatory Committee.

10. The Preparatory Committee had before it the following reports of the Secretary-General:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on the convening of an international conference on the illicit arms trade in all its aspects (A/54/260 and Add.1);

(b) Report of the Secretary-General on small arms, prepared with the assistance of the Group of Governmental Experts on Small Arms (A/54/258).

11. A number of delegations circulated the following papers:

(a) Letter dated 3 February 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Norway to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General transmitting the documents of the second Oslo Meeting on Small Arms, held at Oslo on 6 and 7 December 1999 (A/54/739);

(b) Letter dated 24 February 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Costa Rica to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General transmitting the draft international code of conduct on arms transfers (A/54/766-S/2000/146);

(c) Letter dated 23 February 2000 from the Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations addressed to the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs transmitting decision AHG/DEC.137 (LXX) on the illicit proliferation, circulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons, adopted by the Organization of African Unity at its summit meeting, held at Algiers from 12 to 14 July 1999 (A/CONF.192/PC/2);

(d) Note verbale dated 25 February 2000 from the Permanent Mission of Portugal to the United Nations transmitting the European Union Programme for Preventing and Combating Illicit Trafficking in Conventional Arms and the European Union Code of Conduct (A/CONF.192/PC/3);

(e) "Working paper on elements for a framework for cooperation and action on illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects" submitted by South Africa on 2 March 2000 (A/CONF.192/PC/5);

(f) "Elements for consideration in the substantive preparation for the 2001 Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects", submitted by the European Union on 2 March 2000 (A/CONF.192/PC/6);

(g) Note verbale dated 1 March 2000 from the Permanent Mission of France to the United Nations and note verbale dated 2 March 2000 from the Permanent Observer Mission of Switzerland to the United Nations transmitting the "Food-for-thought paper" entitled "Contribution to the realization of an International Plan of Action in the context of the 2001 Conference: marking, identification and control of small arms and light weapons" (A/CONF.192/PC/7);

(h) Proposal dated 3 March 2000 submitted by Indonesia on behalf of the Movement of Non-Aligned Countries on "The Intersessional work of the Preparatory Committee for the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects" (A/CONF.192/PC/8).

12. A list of delegations participating in the first session of the Preparatory Committee is contained in document A/CONF.192/PC/4.

13. In pursuance of a decision of the General Assembly of 15 December 1999 that summary records be provided for only those meetings at which decisions would be taken, summary records were provided for three meetings.

III. Decisions of the Preparatory Committee

14. At its 10th meeting, on 3 March, the Preparatory Committee took the following decisions.

A. Modalities of attendance of non-governmental organizations at sessions of the Preparatory Committee

15. The Preparatory Committee decided to defer its decision on the modalities of attendance of non-governmental organizations at its sessions.

B. Dates and venues of the Conference in 2001 and subsequent sessions of the Preparatory Committee

16. At the request of the General Assembly in paragraph 5 of its resolution 54/54 V, the Preparatory Committee took the following decisions:

(a) Date and venue of the Conference in 2001

The Preparatory Committee decided to defer its decision on the date and venue of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session;

(b) Dates and venues of subsequent sessions of the Preparatory Committee

The Preparatory Committee decided to hold its second session at United Nations Headquarters from 8 to 19 January 2001. It also decided to hold its third session from 19 to 30 March 2001. The Committee noted the kind offer of the Government of Kenya to host its third session, and decided that the Secretariat would convey to that delegation the financial implications of the offer so that a decision could be taken by the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session.

C. Decision on background documents to be made available in advance

17. The Preparatory Committee decided to continue its consideration of this item.

IV. Recommendations of the Preparatory Committee to the Conference

18. At its 10th meeting, on 3 March, in its consideration of paragraph 7 of resolution 54/54 V, the Preparatory Committee decided to continue its consideration of recommendations to the Conference on all relevant matters, including the objective, a draft agenda, draft rules of procedure and draft final documents, which would include a programme of action.